

# VAN WYCK SAYS "TUNNELS MUST AND SHALL BE EXTENDED TO BROOKLYN."

From white sunshine. It slowly descended, until it had disappeared from view. But only for a second.

In another moment the Mayor had straightened himself, and with a toss of the spade the people saw a little shower of black earth rise above his head and fall in confusion upon the marble stones.

Not all of the soil did the Mayor cast into the air. Evidently the thought and duty came to him to save part of that most precious relic, for he reached for his silk hat, which President Guggenheimer had been holding, and from the spade poured all that remained in the hat.

During the remainder of the ceremony he held the hat in his right hand, and upon entering his private office later deposited the earth in a jar and put the jar into his safe.

Then the silence was broken by a mighty cheer, so strong, so cordial, so hearty, that it might well have been heard in the Bronx and to the other end of Queens. It was the voice of a delighted people, who realized to the full measure the significance of what they had witnessed.

It was the supreme moment in the history of New York.

And as the people were cheering, and amidst continuing their demonstrations, the Mayor turned to Contractor John B. McDonald—the man who has undertaken the most stupendous engineering feat the Nation has ever known—and handed him the spade, and Mr. McDonald, visibly pale and agitated, also bent low and tossed a bit of earth into the air.

## TOSSING OUT THE EARTH.

Then, in turn, did other men toss out the dark earth—Comptroller Cook, President Orr, of the Rapid Transit Commission, and his associates, John H. Martin, Woodbury Langdon, George R. Rives, William Barclay Parsons, Charles Stewart Smith, Morris K. Jessup, Elton L. Burrows, Corporation Counsel Whalen, and the members of the Rapid Transit Subway Construction Company, President August Belmont, Vice-President Walter G. Oakman, Treasurer William C. Emmet, and Secretary Frederick Ryans.

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By the time they had all performed this pleasing and honorable task it looked as if the preliminary work of digging at artesian well had been begun in front of the Municipal Building.

It was at this moment that Private Secretary A. M. Downes, bearing aloft a huge bush of red roses in bloom, approached, and with a silver shovel scooped a hole in the soil and planted the flowers there. This called for further demonstrations. Although comparatively few people could see the incidents occurring, yet each cheer from those near the official party was taken up by those in the rear until they were echoed and re-echoed from Park Row to Broadway and to Wall street.

## THE PROCESSION.

This ceremony of breaking the ground was naturally the most impressive ceremony of the day, but that which preceded and that which followed was fraught with much moment.

On every hand, in dress uniform, were the police, keeping the good-natured crowd within bounds. On the plaza stood the band, in bright attire, and shortly before the officials emerged from the building an overture was played.

Promptly at the announced hour the procession formed in the Mayor's office, and slowly passing along the corridor, came out into the sunshine, and walking down the broad steps, proceeded to the spot chosen for the placing of the commemorative tablet.

The appearance of the company was greeted with much applause, but none of the gentlemen made any response, unless it was to nod to some acquaintance among the coterie of guests gathered about.

## IMPRESSIVE CEREMONIES.

The procession was headed by the Sergeant-at-Arms of the two branches of the Municipal Assembly, Messrs. Padden and Conkey, and they were followed by the Mayor, escorted by the Celebration Committee, and his messenger, bearing aloft the Mayor's flag.

Then came the Rapid Transit Commissioners, Mr. McDonald, Mr. Belmont and his associates, the Presidents of the Assembly, the members of both houses and especially invited guests.

This party, numerous and feeling deeply and palpably the importance of the occasion, grouped themselves silently about the Executive, who, in turning toward them, began his address.

At first his voice was low, but as he proceeded it increased in volume until his words were audible to most of those in the semi-circle. It was not a long address, but in it he pointed out the great importance of the work that was to be officially begun within the next few minutes and the tremendous learning it would have upon the future of the city.

As he closed he turned to President Orr, and that gentleman made his address, outlining the arduous labors of the Commission, the obstacles which had surrounded them, but the supreme satisfaction in knowing at last that these labors had not been in vain.

## THE TABLET PLACED.

His address concluded, Chairman Wines announced the spade to the Mayor, and followed the ceremony of the tossing of the ground.

At this place, on March 24, 1924, the first excavation for the UNDERGROUND RAILWAY.

DAVID TRANT COMMISSIONER, President, Charles Stewart Smith, Secretary, John H. Martin, Woodbury Langdon, George R. Rives, William Barclay Parsons, Charles Stewart Smith, Morris K. Jessup, Elton L. Burrows, Corporation Counsel Whalen, and the members of the Rapid Transit Subway Construction Company, President August Belmont, Vice-President Walter G. Oakman, Treasurer William C. Emmet, and Secretary Frederick Ryans.

dress, and with this the band played "The Star Spangled Banner," and the crowd slowly dispersed.

Thanks to the number of nearly a thousand were then entertained in the Municipal Building, where was stationed another band. Refreshments were served and much good cheer prevailed.

## A Jostling, Happy Crowd.

Thousands of people had found their way to City Hall Park this morning long before the scheduled time for the beginning of the ceremonies which were to mark the beginning of the most gigantic municipal enterprise ever entered into by any American city.

The vast majority of the gathered people were men, and the greater portion of the men were men of toil.

To them the ceremony was one of special import. To them it meant work. It meant that thousands of New York men were to find employment, and that for many months the congestion of the city by the unemployed was to be relieved.

## OVER 1,000 POLICEMEN.

There were real estate men who saw in the ceremony a promise of the opening of a vast real estate field in the upper regions of Manhattan and all over the Borough of the Bronx from the Hudson to Long Island Sound.

Deputy Chief Cortright was on duty early with a fifth of the Police Department in his command, the equal in number of a regiment of the regular army.

There were twenty inspectors, twenty captains, thirty sergeants, thirty roundsmen, and 1,000 policemen, beside a squad of unmounted bicycle police.

All the forenoon, down to 11.30 o'clock, the crowd was permitted to go where it would, and they gathered en masse, 5,000 strong, about the 50-foot roped arena on the raised sidewalk in front of the City Hall, in the center of which a half-dozen men carefully cut a square of five feet dimensions out of the pavement to make a place for the Mayor to dig out that first magic spadeful of Manhattan soil which was to symbolize the opening of the 21-mile tunnel to Kingsbridge and the Bronx.

## A DAY OF DAYS.

"This is a bigger day than the day they celebrated the completion of the aqueduct," said Martin Kees, the keeper of the City Hall.

Sgt. Murphy, of the City Hall station, standing with hands clasped behind him and looking on with critical pose, said:

"It's a little thing they're doing, but it is the beginning of the biggest thing on earth. And the big plate they're going to put in place of these stones will remind the people of another century, when we are all dead and forgotten, of the wonderful work that began on this spot to-day."

George W. Meeks, formerly for many years Superintendent of City Delivery at the Post-Office, said to his neighbor:

"I live in Harlem. Pretty much everybody in my neighborhood think alike to-day. This is the inauguration of a movement that will put Kingsbridge in the heart of the city and enhance real estate values in the Bronx beyond the dreams of the visionary."

"It's the beginning of the biggest move forward that New York ever took," responded John James O'Leary.

## A CRITICISM.

"Mayor Van Wyck is the biggest man in New York City to-day," said a fashionably dressed woman leaning on the arm of a solid citizen on the outskirts of the crowd. To which the man replied facetiously:

"Aber, nicht!"

"Yes, that's it," commented one of a group of men who overheard the little passage; "the name of the little Mayor is on that bronze tablet they're setting in the pavement over there, and the histories will tell of the event and fifty years from now Van Wyck will look like all there was of this occasion."

"What a Hugh J. Grant's name on the tablet! He is the man who ought to handle that silver spade, and his name ought to be in the biggest letters on that tablet—the father of rapid transit."

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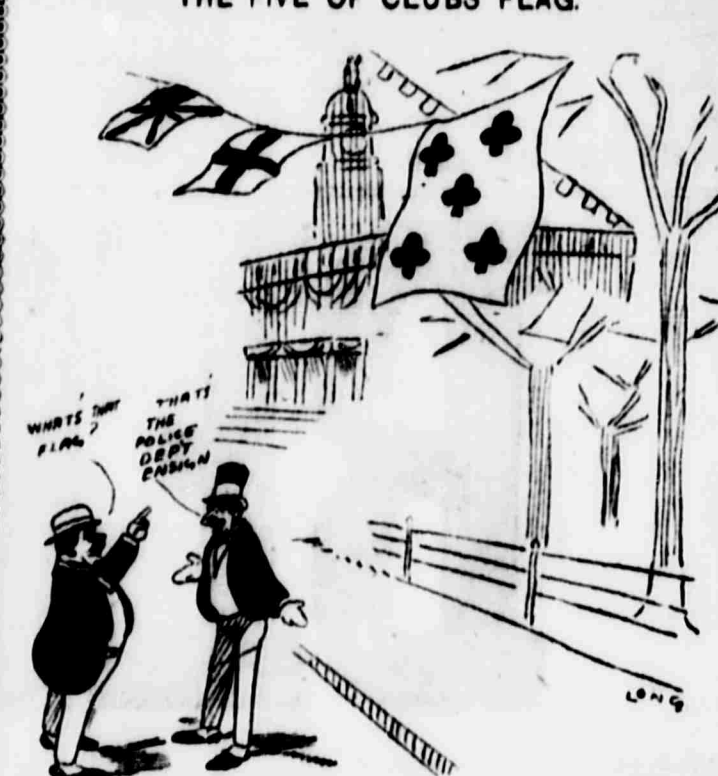
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## THE FIVE OF CLUBS FLAG.



transit than its most enthusiastic advocates ever dreamed of.

## FACTS OF THE UNDERGROUND ROAD.

Length of time to build—2 years

Number of men to be employed—10,000

Length of tunnel—10,700 feet

Earth to be excavated—1,700,225 cubic yards

Rock to be excavated—821,192 cubic yards

Track underground—24,524 feet

Track elevated—3,795 feet

Number of local stations—43

Number of express stations—5

Station elevators—10

Concrete to be used—446,122 cubic yards

Brick, common, enamel and facing—11,819 cubic yards

Stone—11,819 cubic yards

Steel—63,044 net tons

Cast-iron—7,901 net tons

Number of viaduct foundations—1,224

Waterproofing for stations—77,795 square yards

Restoring street surface—270,546 square yards

Restoring park surface—23,000 square yards

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## Speech of the Comptroller.

We celebrate to-day something more than the mere incident of breaking ground for a great public improvement. We celebrate by this ceremony the inauguration of a new and important policy in city government, the policy of municipal ownership and control of great public franchises and utilities.

I earnestly hope the memorial tablet to be here placed commemorates not only the commencement of a great and beneficent public enterprise, but marks as surely the end of reckless extravagance in giving valuable privileges to private corporations, instead of making them permanent sources of income to the municipality as this rapid transit road will surely prove.

This ceremony marks the beginning of the end of a long, hard struggle for rapid transit, but through all the years that we have toiled for this we have been learning something. We have learned the lesson that a great municipality should never relinquish ownership and control of public property that may be developed into a profitable investment.

We are paying now almost \$15,000,000 a year for legislative consolidation, or, in other words, for the sentiment that demanded a city great in wealth, in area and population. The building of this railroad will be the beginning of a vast system of rapid transit that in a few years will extend to every borough and every section, thereby creating a Greater New York in fact as well as in name.

## CITY WILL BE GAINER.

The plan of a great underground system of rapid transit was shadowed at its inception by the fear that its enormous cost would prove a prohibitive obstacle, and it was with apprehension the subject was approached by those whose duty it was to solve it.

It was successfully disposed of by a financial arrangement under which the city will become the owner of the road and her heirs for the easy transportation of millions of physically and mentally industrious men and women to their homes and business centres.

The completion of this undertaking will be second only in importance to that of the Erie Canal, celebrated in this city seventy-five years ago, when De Witt Clinton mingled the waters of Lake Erie with those of New York Bay. This canal connected our harbor with the inland seas of this continent and brought into close communion our people with the teeming millions of the Imperial West.

## PROGRESS OF THE CITY.

Through this waterway the wealth and riches of the West were poured for years, without serious competition, into the lap of New York City.

This made our city the commercial and financial metropolis of the world, with a population of three and a half millions of people, for whose accommodation and comfort this rapid transit underground road is necessary. The contrast exhibited between the two periods is striking and instructive.

De Witt Clinton saluted in 1825 a city of one hundred and sixty thousand souls. We speak to-day of a population of three and a half millions. These slow stage-coach was the only means of passenger transportation, now superseded by steam and electricity.

## ON TO BROOKLYN.

The contract for the work begun to-day involves the expenditure by the city of over thirty millions of dollars, the largest single contract ever given out for such work. It necessarily involves further expenditure, for this road must and shall be extended under the East River to Brooklyn's business centre, bringing closer together in every respect the different parts of our city, separated by the bays and rivers of its wonderful harbor.

## HOPEFUL FOR FUTURE.

The people of Greater New York are to be congratulated that, with all of her former heavy expenditures and, at times, somewhat reckless issuance of bonds, she is now, for the first time, able to undertake such an expensive enterprise, which will turn out the first real test of this experiment of municipal ownership of public utilities on such a scale as to be decisive of that principle.

Let us indulge in the sincere hope that the early completion of this eventful and gigantic undertaking may bring even a more perfect system of rapid

fifty years hence, when the lease of this tunnel road will have terminated and be again at her disposition, but we have now the satisfaction of knowing that our present action will be recognized as having largely contributed to that growth and prominence, which that wisdom and foresight, which had made provision for the possible needs of the future cannot fail of appreciation from those who are to follow us in the time of civic succession.

It has been asked by some of those who have been skeptical as to the outcome of the tunnel system: "What does rapid transit really mean?" One of our local newspapers has aptly answered: "Rapid transit means the City Hall Park in fifteen minutes. This is true as far as it goes, but it really means very much more than that."

Rapid transit for New York, briefly stated, is this: A system of economic passenger transportation from all sections of the city that will continuously meet the requirements of our continually increasing needs; and this we claim, will be assured by an intelligent development of the tunnel system the authorized here-to-day.

I desire, on behalf of the Board of Rapid Transit Commissioners, to express our appreciation of the support and cooperation we have received from the Legislature of the State, from the city authorities, from the Appellate and the Supreme Court, from the press of the city, from our worthy and respected contractor and lessee, from the prominent and enterprising firm of bankers who are his financial agents, August Belmont & Co.

While the workmen were preparing the earth for the silver spade a human bone was turned up about three feet below the surface of the concrete pavement of the plaza.

The bone was apparently a portion of

## TWO AGED WOMEN FATAALLY BURNED.

### Mrs. Prindle Tried to Save Mrs. McNeely and Her Own Clothing Caught Fire.

Death came in smoke and flame to Mrs. Mary McNeely, of Brooklyn, today, and two other persons, a man and a woman, who jeopardized their lives to save her, will probably die as a result of their bravery.

Mrs. McNeely lived at 266 Front street. She was seventy years old and feeble. Upon her neighbors she depended for help in performing her household duties. With a match she engaged to set fire to a small heap of rubbish in her front yard this morning. There was a brisk breeze blowing and the tiny flame caught the old woman's skirts. In an instant she was the centre of a pillar of fire.

Striking for help she hobbled into the hallway of 216 Front street. The draught

the tubula. It was about eight inches long.

In another moment the Mayor had straightened himself, and with a toss of the spade the people saw a little shower of black earth rise above his head and fall in confusion upon the marble stones.

Not all of the soil did the Mayor cast into the air. Evidently the thought and duty came to him to save part of that most precious relic, for he reached for his silk hat, which President Guggenheimer had been holding, and from the spade poured all that remained in the hat.

During the remainder of the ceremony he held the hat in his right hand, and upon entering his private office later deposited the earth in a jar and put the jar into his safe.

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